

# critical digest

139 East 47 St. NY 17 NY  
EL 5-6894 T. M. Kraus



---

April 4, 1956 Vol VIII No 7. The weekly NYC theatre newsletter \$25 year \$6.50 quarter

---

## This Week

Anna Lucasta-Temple  
Theatre 242 E 14 4/4. Wm. Gyimes revival of Philip Yordan comedy... The Plough and the Stars- Bar-bizon Plaza, 4/5. Craftsmen revival of O'Casey play with Lionel Stander... Swiftly the Years- Provincetown 4/6. 3 one act plays by John Grahame.

Affair of Honor-Barrymore  
4/6. Theatre Guild presents new comedy by Bill Hoffman. With Dennis King, Betsy Palmer.

## Next Week

The Beautiful People-  
Theatre East 211 E 60. Hunt-King revival of Saroyan play 4/10... Waiting for Godot-Golden 4/16. Mother of Us All-Phoenix SideShow -4/16.

## Interview Hi-Lite

Michael Redgrave is the nearest thing possible to the completely happy man in the theatre, sums up Hawkins, World Telegram-Sun. Afternoons he directed A Month in Country, while nights he is playing in Tiger at the Gates. In between times he is recipient of so many tempting offers that he can comfortably neglect to commit himself to any of them.

## Digests of Current NYC Theatre Reviews

Mister Johnson- Beck 3/29. Majority of critics found Norman Rosten's adaption of Joyce Cary's novel of a fabulous Negro clerk in Nigeria fascinating theatre. But Times and Herald Tribune reviewers feared production emerged inspite of moving performances as a series of episodes, not a play. Pro side headed by Chapman, News, who billed play as lovely and touching, and production as beautiful. Earle Hyman in the title role won plaudits from all, including the dissenters. Coleman noted play will prove rewarding to those willing to settle for superior characterization, fine acting and exotic color. Title character, raves Hawkins, World Telegram-Sun, is one of the most astonishing imaginative creations of modern theatre, played by Hyman with magical insight, variety and sensitiveness. Watts, Post, admitted play flounders, but he found it both upsetting and inescapably moving. On the con side, Atkinson, Times, did see a lot of original material, but feared the parts were keener than the whole. Cheryl Crawford production, Robert Lewis direction and exciting African dances staged by Pearl Primus were approved by all.

The Little Glass Clock-Golden . 3/26-3/31. Unanimous and harsh pannings received by Aldrich-Myers production of Hugh Mills comedy starring Eva Gabor. A gold plated bore, summed up Times man. Sex, in the improper hands, can be pretty terrifying, added Kerr, Herald Tribune. Chapman, News, urged Victor Borge to return to Golden Theatre An empty little charade with a hollow ring, commented Coleman, Mirror. A waste of time and effort, agreed Watts, Post. All critics commented on beauty of Cecil Beaton's costumes and sets.

Beaver Coat-Greenwich Mews-3/28. 1893 play by Gerhart Hauptmann is dated and not worth reviving, reported Atkinson, Times, and Herridge, Post. Both noted actors did their best, Herridge actually thought production was one of group's best, but not good enough to overcome ancient script.

Another 48th St. theatre will soon be destroyed. The President has been bought by Leone Restaurant and will be used as an entrance. The theatre opened in 1926 as the Edyth Totten Theatre. Its most recent "off-Broadway" tenant was The Beautiful Changes. Currently on 48th St. East of Broadway, workmen are demolishing the 48th St. Theatre. Recently the Vanderbilt Theatre, also on 48th St East of Broadway, was torn down and replaced by a parking garage.

### Plays

The Little Glass Clock and The Chalk Garden closed... Waiting for Godot will open April 16 at Golden... Ziegfeld Follies considering \$8.80 top... Bus Stop has extended its run to April 21... NY State Assembly again rejected bills to okay bars in legit theatres.

### Players

Thomas Gomez will replace Burl Ives in Cat on a Hot Tin Roof April 14... Tom Helmore engaged as standby to Rex Harrison in My Fair Lady... Bramwell Fletcher joined cast of The Lovers, day following closing in The Little Glass Clock... Robert Downing joined cast of Wake Up Darling... Walter Slezak will quit Fanny May 31... Arlene Dahl will star for 2 months in Silk Stockings... Robert Newton, age 50, died.

### Other Broadways

The Diary of Anne Frank will be sent by U. S. State Dept this summer... Jean-Louis Barrault will bring his company to Broadway next season... Studio Theatre, Washington, D. C. re-opened with Picnic... Strip for Action to play Pittsburgh April 9 instead of Washington, D. C.

### Vaudeville

New Palace show features Don Cumming, Rose Wyse, Jr. Jan Adams, Howard Swinson and Betty Luster... 24th annual "Glory of Easter" pageant at Radio City Music Hall.

### Summer Playhouses

Bucks County Playhouse, PA. to open May 5 with Solid Gold Cadillac... Neptune, NJ, Music Circus opens June 25 with Kismet... New music tent theatres planned for Camden and New Brunswick, NJ... Detroit Melody Circus Tent opens June 11 with Call Me Madam... Group 20 Players at Wellesley, Mass, open June 25... \$5 bonus on \$30 season ticket offered by Gateway Music-Go-Round, Atlantic, City, N. J... The Eleventh Hour, play about Woodrow Wilson, to be presented for 2 weeks at Gypsy Hill Theatre, Staunton, Va... Siobhan McKenna to star in Saint Joan at Harvard University Drama Festival.

### Theatre TV & Radio Notes

NBC Radio to give 5 hour salute to Rodgers and Hammerstein on April 5... Frederic March and Claire Trevor to star in NBC TV Producers Showcase telecast of Dodsworth... Helen Hayes, Judith Anderson, Susan Strasberg and Siobhan McKenna to star in NBC TV Maurice Evans production May 6 of The Cradle Song... Ballet Ballads, Take a Giant Step, and Playboy of the Western World to be featured on ABC TV Theatre Guild shows next season... Noel Coward will appear in his The Happy Breed on CBS TV in October.

### Theatre Film Notes

Inherit the Wind screen rights bought by Stanley Kramer... Billy Budd screen rights bought by 20th Century Fox... Ava Gardner to star in MGM The Little Hut.

### Theatre Book Notes

The Chalk Garden, Damn Yankees, and The Lark published by Random House... Christopher Fry translation of The Lark published by Oxford University Press.





GREEN

ROOM

DEPARTMENT

TONY AWARDS...Diary of Anne Frank was picked by American Theatre Wing Tony Award Committee as best play of the season. Julie Harris, The Lark, and Gwen Verdon, Damn Yankee, were picked as best actresses in drama and musical. Ray Walston, Damn Yankee, for best actor in musical, Paul Muni for best actor in drama. Theatre Collection of the NY Public Library and the Three Penny Opera were given special citations. Awards were made at Plaza Hotel dinner.

COLUMN TIPS...My Fair Lady producers splitting 60% share of profits with authors and director Moss Hart, says Winchell...The booze habit may keep a famed entertainer from the lead in a Broadway musical, hears Wilson...Rodgers and Hammerstein considering Susan Hayward for their next show, whispers Kilgallen.

DREAM THEATRE...Before Roger L. Stevens builds any theatres on Lincoln Square, Chapman, News, would like to voice his 4 cents worth on the subject. He would like to see without beheading the fellow in front. He would like a place for his hat. Ushers should be provided with electric canes to keep crowds moving. Esculators, up and down, to balcony and lounge. Plenty of doors and ticket takers. A bigger street lobby. Bigger box offices and swivel chairs for treasurers.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS...Moscow should be put on itinerary of every good US play and musical, the trip paid for by State Dept funds, suggests Gray, Post...If Equity Community Theatre project cannot find the right plays and do them well enough it must reconsider its position and value in the community, states Funke, Times...McClain, Journal-American, admits easier to write a bad review than a good notice.

CENSORED STRIP...Possible censorship of Strip for Action by License Commissioner O'Connell was panned by Variety. No municipal appointee is endowed with the wisdom to decide what the public should be allowed to see or read. The legal way to deal with obscenity in the theatre is via prosecution in the courts, with the jury deciding.

DRAMA MAIL BOX...Reasons for attending theatre on weekdays were listed by Sylvia Siegler in Times Mailbag. Ticket prices are cheaper, parking easier, taxis available, baby sitter rates lower, restaurant service better.

PROS & CONS BY T. M. K

Mister Johnson is a beautifully, moving unity of acting, direction, writing. Episodes presented add up to a highly unusual and meaningful evening in the theatre. Play makes up in humanity what it might lack in plot structure.

The Little Glass Glock came across like a TV producer's idea of a sexy comedy. Writing and direction tied for dullness. Costumes, sets and Eva Gabor were breathtakingly beautiful. It is obvious that the kind of France never had it so good.





CFF

## BROADWAY

Free evening open air performances of Shakespeare will be given twice weekly by Shakespearean Theatre Workshop, Inc at East River Park Amphitheatre, East River Drive and Grand St, NYC. Season will open June 20 and continue through Sept 7. Performances will be given Wed. and Fri. Productions will include *As You Like It*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Taming of the Shrew* and *Twelfth Night*. Joseph Papp, director, plans to raise funds from foundations and the NYC Visitors Bureau.

*The Iceman Cometh* will be revived by Circle in Square in May with a 7 30 PM curtain... *Tempo Playhouse* to re-open April 23 with *The Maids* and *Purgatory* playing Tues, Wed, Thur at 8 30 and Fri, Sat, Sun at 9 40. Ionesco's *The Lesson* will also be presented by *Tempo* on Fri, Sat, Sun at 6 40 PM and Midnight.

A trilogy of one act plays by John Grahame will be presented at Provincetown April 6... *The Little Late Show* will be presented Saturday midnights at Cherry Lane... *Mrs. Warren's Profession* will be revived May 29 at Davenport with Frances Adler... *Mary Stuart* opens 4 week run at Guild Hall, 87 & West End April 6... *Dr. Faustus* will be present at Stuyvesant Casino, 2nd Ave, April 9... *Absalom* opens May 3 at 122 2nd Ave Herbert Machiz directing... *Song of Walt Whitman* presented one night at Alhambra Hall, 15-2nd Av by Arthur Kingsley.

*Fortunato* and *Mary and the Fairy* was rated by *Calt*, *Times*, as a worthwhile show case for several gifted performers. He picked Norman Budd, Leon Benedict, Paula Baerman as comers. Kerner, *Womens Wear*, tabbed double bill as one of the most notable of season.



THEATRE

## BOOK

## COMMENTS

"Long Day's Journey Into Night" by Eugene O'Neill (Yale Press) does not make as interesting reading from a playscript standpoint as it does from autobiographical standpoint, agree Atkinson, *Times*, *Kerr*, *Herald Tribune*, and *Down, Variety*. Critics did not that this type of play often plays better than it reads. It is currently being produced at Royal Dramatic Theatre, Stockholm.

THEATRE

## RECORD

## COMMENTS

"Three Penny Opera" in German (Vanguard) is given an authentic performance, showing the opera as the classic it is, comments Molleson, *Herald Tribune*... "Under Milk Wood-A Play for Voices" (Westminister) is an excellent version of Dylan Thomas play-in text, execution and taste, rates Lask, *Times*. It was made from a BBC broadcast.

---

\*Comprehensive coverage NYC daily critics comments and ratings on current Broadway, Off Broadway, Summer Theatre. Plus complete news roundup of NY theatre.

\*Weekly NYC theatre newsletter. 8th yr. Perfect gift for stage struck 52 weeks yr. \$25 yr. \$6.50 quarter. Gift card included

---

CRITICAL DIGEST--139 E 47--NYC

---

